

NOTES.

A FONT OF THE SUFFOLK TYPE AT STAPLE, KENT.



The font here illustrated is in the church of St. James at Staple in Kent, a small village between Sandwich and Canterbury. As will be seen it is a font of a type very common in Suffolk and South Norfolk, but unknown elsewhere. By the fifteenth century, to which date the group of fonts under consideration may be assigned, work on tombs, brasses and fonts had become much more centralised and commercialised than it was at an earlier date, and, from their general similarity in design, there is little doubt that all these fonts emanated from some central workshop in the area, probably at Ipswich. Rev. Cyril Johnson, rector of Staple, has kindly written to inform me that "there is no record or tradition

about the font to give any grounds for supposing that it has been put into the church in recent times."

The octagonal bowl is carved with the emblems of the four Evangelists with labels, as at Framlingham and Snape, alternating with (a) an angel holding a shield on which are carved the emblems of the Passion—cross, three nails, crown of thorns (defaced), hyssop, spear and two sponges, (b) God the Father enthroned and crowned holding a crucifix, (c) a figure with staff, book and a wallet slung over his shoulder and falling at his side, (d) an angel holding a blank shield. The figure (c) is probably St. James. Staple Church is dedicated to St. James, and if this identification is correct it suggests that this font was made especially for this church. Angels with outspread wings are carved on the under-face of the bowl and rosettes on the top of the base. At the corners of the base lions alternate with wodewoges or wild men with clubs, a subject very popular with the late medieval craftsmen in Suffolk.

This font at Staple is of great interest as the only known example of this type exported from Suffolk. This note is compiled from information kindly supplied by Rev. Cyril Johnson, rector of Staple, and from notes made on the occasion of a visit to this church in 1933.

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